

"I've got my idea, are you ready to hear it? My idea is to invent a time-locked capsule for opioid-based medications. When you pick up your prescription from the pharmacy, it's time locked and sealed in this capsule. The only way you can get your medicine, and the only time that you can get your medicine, is when the capsule unlocks. It would be set to a specific time, based on your dosage as written by the physician. If your dosage is for every twelve hours, then the capsule will open once every twelve hours. It will open, you take out your pill, you take your pill, and that's it. That's my idea, that's what I'd like to invent, I'd do it to fix myself. I hate my addiction." That's where this story begins, *The Weekly Win* for May 3, 2017.

The First One Back

When I first wrote about the *Rehabilitation through Innovation* program, a friend of mine told me, "You are going to learn more from them, than they will from you." I took her words to heart, and wow, what an experience this has been. The Crawford County Sheriff, Darin Layman, and I are now four weeks into the program and it's been the experience of a lifetime, for all of us. It's working. And, the success that we've seen is credit to a whole lot of people. The Crawford County Sheriff's Department, the Meramec Regional Planning Commission, the Missouri Division of Workforce Development, Frisco's, Missouri Hick BBQ, the program participants, my mother, my wife, and my daughter. Together, we've created an experience that is encouraging, opportunistic, and self-forgiving. The participants of the program have openly embraced our support, they have shown genuine appreciation, and they've shed a lot of tears (males and females)...right in front of me, every week. For the first time, in a long time, if not for the first time ever, they have hope in their life. I have MANY stories to tell, but I'll start with this one, the first one back.

On the first night of any of the *Adopt An Innovator* programs, I tell all of the participants, "I talk more tonight than I will for the entire rest of the program." On the first night, I provide a comprehensive review of the program and I share about my life and background. I do this so that the participants can get to know me, and know that I've seen life at its best, I've seen life at its worst, and all things in-between. With this program, I did the exact same.

When I finished providing the overview one of the participants immediately, and I mean immediately, raised his hand. "I've got my idea, are you ready to hear it? My idea is to invent a time-locked capsule for opioid-based medications. When you pick up your prescription from the pharmacy, it's time locked and sealed in this capsule. The only way you can get your medicine, and the only time that you can get your medicine, is when the capsule unlocks. It would be set to a specific time, based on your dosage as written by the physician. If your dosage is for every twelve hours, then the capsule will open once every twelve hours. It will open, you take out your pill, you take your pill, and that's it. That's my idea, that's what I'd like to invent, I'd do it to fix myself. I hate my addiction." We all went silent and simply stared at him, the entire room, all of us. The silence wasn't for lack of words, it was recognition of the potential of everyone in that cell block. It was our moment to realize this, it happened quickly, and we all shared it together.

Unfortunately, the participant that presented his idea to us bonded out the very next morning. And, he hasn't returned. Which, from a legal perspective, is a very good thing. From a program perspective, it saddens me. The Sheriff and I proactively recognized this challenge before the program even began. In County jails, the inmates are held until their court date or until they can be bonded out. Each

participant was told at the outset, "If you bond out, but would still like to complete the program, you are most welcome to come back and participate as a civilian. You can come back for each session, we will bring you back to the room, you can participate, and then we will escort you back out of the cell block and back to civilian life. If you want this experience, we will gladly do that for you." So, would any of them come back? Well, this week, we were provided our answer.

Wednesday was a miserable day of rain in Crawford County, it poured down rain all day long. Wednesday afternoons are when we complete the program for the male participants. Upon my arrival to the Crawford County Jail, one of the participants was waiting for me in the lobby. He had bonded out the previous week on Thursday, but there he was right in front of me. He came back, the first one back.

He was cleared through standing operating procedures by the Sheriff's Department, and was escorted back to the cell block to participate in the program. During Week 3, the program focuses on, "The Leader Within." Our focus of discussion centers on leadership at the personal level, which requires each of us to be a leader within ourselves and our family. And, what a wonderful gift we have been given. With this responsibility we are each given a lineage changing opportunity.

Then, I ask the difficult question. What is your ancestral baggage? What issues were passed on to you from your parents, because these same issues were passed on to your parents from your grandparents, and they theirs? Where do your demons come from? But, there is opportunity for change. Per this, I introduce a new series of questions.

How many demons end with me, never to be passed on again, through my healing, to the betterment of generations to follow? I tell them, "As the leader in yourself and your family, and by family I don't just mean your immediate family, I include the MANY generations that will follow. You have the responsibility, and the opportunity, to make a genealogical pivot that will FOREVER change the course of your lineage. Embrace this. What is your ancestral baggage? What demons no longer exist because of you? What demons get passed on through you?" It's a powerful session, with a meaningful impact.

He was actively engaged throughout the entire session, but this particular session he focused much more on note-taking, and less on conversation. Our entire group had excellent dialogue and we talked openly about issues of no self-confidence, broken homes, addiction, alcoholism, poverty, and a general feeling of no self-worth. Our conversations are real, and they are not censored. Through this, we make progress.

After the session with the male participants, they were escorted out of the cell block where we hold the program, and back into their individual pods where they reside while incarcerated. As they were escorted out, he was also escorted out, and he exited the jail facilities.

After the male inmates were escorted back to their individual pods, the female participants of the program were escorted into the cell block so that we could discuss the Work Keys Assessment, which they would all take the following day. The female participants of the program have been engaged immediately from the outset, and they had all kinds of questions regarding the assessment. I visited with them for nearly an hour, and then I exited the jail facility and headed back to Cuba on Highway

19.

As I'm driving back to Cuba, on Highway 19, I get about three miles outside of Steelville and I see him walking along the roadside on Highway 19. It's pouring down rain, pouring. I pull over and he begins to jog towards my vehicle, he doesn't know it's me, he has no idea. When he gets to the passenger door, he begins to open it, and he looks inside and smiles.

"Man, if you are willing to do whatever you had to do to get here today. It would be my absolute pleasure to take you home. That's the least that I can do. Get in." "Thanks man, I knew my trip was a one way ride today, but I was okay with that. My nephew, he could only get me here, I couldn't ask him to wait around for me. I knew I'd have to walk home. But, I was okay with that. And, I still am okay with that." "Where am I taking you?" "Just outside of Bourbon, I'll tell you the way as we go."

From where we were, to where I was taking him, the trip was slightly over sixteen miles one way. He knew this. In the pouring down rain, on a cold and wet day, knowing his ride was one way only, he was at peace walking home sixteen miles, and he'd already began the journey. We talked, actually, he talked and I listened. Ideas, ideas, and more ideas. Sixteen miles on gravel roads gave him plenty of time to share the basic concepts of his ideas, and he had a lot of them. And, they were good. Actually, beyond good. When you have an idea on how to re-invent the internal combustion engine, and it's actually plausible because you are in the drawings of a prototype phase, I consider that to be a good idea. At the least, the idea had my full attention.

When we arrived to his house, he made me stop. His residence was at the end of a long gravel drive, and he didn't want me to drive him down it. I told him, "I get it, I completely get it. Thanks for coming back today. You didn't have to, but you did. For that, I am grateful. Thank you." "Do you know why I came back today? I felt like I had a level of responsibility to the other guys in there. Other guys have bonded out during the program, and they didn't come back, not one of them. My buddy, the guy that sits next to me, we met in jail. He's a good guy, I like him, and he needs the program. I came back for him, and I came back for all them. I'm out, and I'm back. If anyone else gets out before our five weeks is up, I hope they come back. I hope that I was the example, that's why I came back. By the way, I don't think I'll be there tomorrow to take the Work Keys Assessment. I've already taken it, and I already have the National Career Readiness Certificate. Although, I am intrigued, because I don't have the platinum level, and I'm interested in that."

Side note, he was the first, but others have come back as well. That's my win for the week, and I have MANY more to follow!